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Economic Note

1985 Professional incomes of US veterinarians, by hours worked and years since graduation

In 1985, the mean income of veterinarians in private practice was $48,056, and the mean income of veterinarians not in private practice was $47,280.[1] In this report, veterinarians' incomes are reported separately for private practice owners and private practice employees. Owners' individual incomes have been reducing veterinarians' 1985 incomes according to hours worked and years of experience.

Mean income, by hours worked

Veterinarians indicated their 1985 individual net income, before personal taxes, from professional veterinary medical activity, in private practice was $42,498 (Table 1), which represents a 7.1% increase from $39,669 in 1983.[2] The mean number of hours worked per week in professional veterinary medical activity was 51.2 hours. For 50 weeks worked per year, US private practitioners earned an average of $16.89/h in 1985, ranging from $13.47/h for

Table 1—Mean professional income and hours worked for veterinarians in private practice, 1985

	Large animal exclusive	Large animal predominant	Mixed animal	Small animal predominant	Small animal exclusive	Equine	All practices
Veterinarian-owner							
Mean income*	$41,516	$47,208	$42,737	$46,915	$54,608	$59,652	$51,064
(No. of responses)	(81)	(195)	(172)	(193)	(214)	(90)	...
Mean hours worked per week	55.9	56.7	56.2	52.5	48.3	58.1	51.5
Mean income per hour†	$15.05	$16.79	$15.09	$18.00	$22.93	$20.16	$20.18
Veterinarian-employee							
Mean income	$31,750	$27,101	$27,269	$30,875	$31,104	$37,819	$30,665
(No. of responses)	(20)	(53)	(78)	(88)	(216)	(63)	...
Mean hours worked per week	53.0	56.6	56.6	51.6	46.9	59.1	50.6
Mean income per hour	$11.92	$9.79	$9.89	$12.37	$13.59	$12.91	$12.51
All veterinarians in private practice							
Mean income‡	$40,051	$42,790	$37,911	$41,963	$42,744	$51,123	$42,498
(No. of responses)	(101)	(248)	(250)	(281)	(430)	(161)	...
Mean hours worked per week	55.6	56.8	56.3	52.2	47.7	58.5	51.2
Mean income per hour	$14.51	$15.23	$13.47	$16.26	$18.21	$17.31	$16.89

*Mean income for private practice owners defined as mean return to labor and management, ie, individual net practice income less 12% return on owner's equity in the practice (fair market value of fixed assets less long-term debt). †Based on estimated 50 weeks worked per year. ‡Weighted mean of private practice owners' and employees' incomes, by practice type.

duced computationally by a 12% return on the owners' equity in fixed assets used in the practice; thus, owners' individual income represents only professional veterinary medical income. This income adjustment permits a more realistic comparison of private practice owners', practice employees', and nonprivate practicing veterinarians' 1985 incomes according to hours worked and years of experience.

In 1985, the mean professional income of US veterinarians including income from practice, salary, profit sharing, and bonuses. Mean income was calculated as the arithmetic mean by summing all income values and dividing by the number of respondents. Respondents were included in this analysis if they worked on the average at least 30 h/wk and at least 48 weeks in their reported practice type or for their employer in 1985.

mixed animal practice to $18.21/h for small animal exclusive practice.

A comparison of veterinarian-owners and veterinarian-employees in private practice indicates that owners and employees worked nearly the same number of hours per week. Veterinarian-employees earned $12.51/h, up $1.12/h from 1983. Veterinarian-owners increased their hourly earnings from $16.89 in 1983 to

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Table 2—Mean professional income and hours worked for veterinarians not in private practice, 1985

	College or university	Federal government	State or local government	Armed forces	Industry	Other/not-for-profit organization	All employers
Mean income	$43,804	$43,323	$40,549	$41,688	$62,547	$53,529	$47,280
(No. of responses)	(239)	(213)	(211)	(194)	(146)	(71)	...
Mean hours worked per week	52.7	45.6	44.2	48.0	49.2	48.9	49.6
Mean income per hour*	$16.85	$19.61	$18.53	$17.64	$25.96	$21.98	$19.49

*Based on estimated 50 weeks worked per year.

Table 3—Mean professional incomes of private practice owners, by years since graduation, 1985

Years since graduation	Large animal exclusive	Large animal predominant	Mixed animal	Small animal predominant	Small animal exclusive	Equine
3 to 7 years*	$32,044	$42,430	$43,031	$38,486	$40,848	$49,820
	(22)†	(33)	(35)	(40)	(30)	(25)
8 to 12 years	47,511	48,732	48,352	46,945	52,593	70,002
	(15)	(53)	(38)	(53)	(50)	(26)
13 to 17 years	41,390	58,184	40,838	60,941	62,905	61,611
	(14)	(18)	(15)	(26)	(35)	(17)
18 to 22 years	55,801	49,560	46,203	54,758	59,358	53,259
	(9)	(19)	(13)	(23)	(37)	(7)
23 to 27 years	41,567	49,172	39,238	60,073	78,313	78,109
	(7)	(29)	(20)	(15)	(22)	(7)
28 to 32 years	37,402	44,864	47,220	41,723	32,727	57,056
	(10)	(16)	(23)	(18)	(20)	(5)
33 to 40 years	...	38,675	31,405	31,961	56,335	...
		(16)	(12)	(7)	(9)	
More than 40 years	...	46,835	39,500	34,060	53,013	74,456
		(10)	(13)	(5)	(10)	(6)

*Mean income for private practice owners defined as mean return to labor and management, ie, individual net practice income less 12% return on owner's equity in the practice (fair market value of fixed assets less long-term debt). †Number of usable responses in parentheses.

Table 4—Mean professional incomes of private practice employees, by years since graduation, 1985

Years since graduation	Large animal exclusive	Large animal predominant	Mixed animal	Small animal predominant	Small animal exclusive	Equine
1 to 2 years	$22,500	$21,061	$22,815	$23,500	$23,435	$27,500
	(3)*	(14)	(19)	(18)	(39)	(12)
3 to 7 years	29,772	29,031	27,654	30,136	29,789	35,088
	(11)	(32)	(42)	(44)	(107)	(29)
8 to 12 years	29,500	...	31,428	41,125	39,038	45,909
	(3)		(14)	(16)	(39)	(11)

*Number of usable responses in parentheses.

$20.18 in 1985, an increase of $3.29/h.

The mean 1985 income of US veterinarians not in private practice was $47,280 (Table 2). The mean number of hours worked per week to earn income in professional veterinary medical activity was 49.6 hours, ranging from 44.2 hours in state or local government to 52.7 hours in academia.

On the basis of 50 weeks worked per year, nonprivate practice veterinarians earned an average $19.49/h in 1985, down $0.44 from 1983. The decline was attributable to slight increases in mean annual income (+1.2%) and mean hours worked (+1.4%).

Mean income, by years since graduation

Professional incomes were analyzed by the number of years since graduation from veterinary medical college. Peak earning years for small animal predominant, small animal exclusive, and equine predominant practice owners were in the 23- to 27-year group (Table 3). Owners of small animal exclusive and equine practices reached their peak with a mean professional income of approximately $78,000. The highest mean incomes for large animal predominant and exclusive practice owners were $55,801 and $58,184, respectively. Comparison with 1983 shows that established large animal practice owners suffered losses in earnings over the 2-year period.[2]

With respect to veterinarians employed in private practice, mean professional incomes were estimated for 3 groups by years since graduation: 1 to 2 years; 3 to 7 years; and 8 to 12 years (Table 4). As in 1983, large animal exclusive employed veterinarians' incomes were stable after 3 to 7 years of experience. For all other practice types, earnings for employed veterinarians increased steadily and peaked in the 8- to 12-year group. In the 8- to 12-year group, highest earnings were achieved by equine veterinarians, with a mean of $45,909, down 15% from 1983. Veterinarians in mixed animal practice had the lowest mean incomes in this

Table 5—Mean professional incomes of veterinarians not in private practice, by years since graduation, 1985

Years since graduation	College or university	Federal government	State or local government	Armed forces	Industry	Other/not-for-profit organization
3 to 7 years	$24,724 (62)*	$28,811 (23)	$33,357 (7)	$32,316 (49)	$40,411 (17)	$25,583 (8)
8 to 12 years	39,598 (56)	37,107 (28)	36,666 (24)	38,555 (54)	48,439 (33)	43,133 (9)
13 to 17 years	45,100 (25)	38,071 (14)	39,833 (18)	45,625 (24)	56,817 (15)	69,833 (6)
18 to 22 years	53,963 (22)	44,500 (20)	41,050 (20)	49,135 (37)	70,684 (19)	55,000 (12)
23 to 27 years	61,860 (25)	51,341 (41)	44,828 (35)	58,300 (15)	80,280 (25)	64,464 (14)
28 to 32 years	59,795 (22)	49,269 (39)	41,833 (36)	50,500 (3)	85,112 (20)	59,316 (6)
33 to 40 years	61,200 (15)	46,300 (25)	39,846 (49)	...	60,615 (13)	51,357 (7)
More than 40 years	50,555 (9)	47,500 (14)	40,600 (18)	46,214 (7)	...	68,166 (6)

*Number of usable responses in parentheses.

group, with $31,428, up 23% from 1983.

Mean professional incomes of veterinarians not in private practice also were analyzed with respect to number of years since graduation (Table 5). In contrast to private practice, nonprivate practice earnings had a relatively steady growth pattern throughout veterinarians' careers in industry, government, and academia. As in 1983, earnings were highest in industry in all groups by years since graduation.

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1. Wise JK. 1985 Incomes for US veterinarians. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 1987;190:1333–1337.

2. Wise JK. 1983 Professional incomes of US veterinarians, by hours worked and years since graduation. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 1985;186:1108–1110.

Suppression of cortisol responses in cats during megestrol acetate and prednisolone therapy

Seven cats were given prednisolone (at least 2 mg/kg of body weight/day) and 7 cats were given megestrol acetate (5 mg/cat/day) PO from days 1 to 16. Three cats were not treated. Basal and stimulated cortisol concentrations, food and water intake, hematologic and blood biochemical changes, urinalyses, and hepatic and cutaneous histologic changes were studied in all cats before, during, and 2 weeks after treatment. Cats given prednisolone or megestrol acetate had significant suppression of stimulated cortisol values on day 8. This change was more marked on day 15, when the suppression in cats given megestrol acetate also was significantly more severe than that in cats given prednisolone. Recovery of adrenal reserve was considered present on day 30 in 6 of 7 cats given prednisolone, but in only 3 of 7 cats given megestrol acetate. Eosinopenia, glycosuria, and hepatocyte swelling from glycogen deposition were recorded occasionally in treated cats of both groups, providing additional circumstantial evidence for glucocorticoid activity of megestrol acetate in cats. Abrupt withdrawal of prednisolone or megestrol acetate therapy should be avoided in cats to reduce the chance of precipitating clinical signs of hypoadrenocorticism, even after treatment for as little as 1 week.—*D. J. Middleton, A. D. J. Watson, C. J. Howe, et al in Can J Vet Res 51 (January 1987):60.*